



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, July 24, 2012

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Councilor Johnson and Councilor Peruzzotti

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnahan.

3. Calendar and Communications

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

2012-0224 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meetings of July 10, 2012 and July 12, 2012 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Watson, to adopt.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 5 - Mayor Somers, Councilor Flax, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Antipas

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

2010-0084 High School Water Infiltration Issues

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Streeter, to enter executive session at 7:03 p.m. to discuss 2010-0084 High School Water Infiltration Issues and to invite Town Attorney Eric Callahan and Town Manager Mark Oefinger to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Recommended for a Resolution

The executive session concluded at 7:32 p.m.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Flax, to authorize the Town Manager and Town Attorney to proceed with the agreement to address the leaking windows at the high school.

The motion carried unanimously

2010-0215 Community Access Television Application to DPUC

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Flax, to enter executive session at 7:33 p.m. to discuss 2010-0215 Community Access Television Application to DPUC and to invite Town

Attorney Mike Carey, Town Manager Mark Oefinger, and Betty Anne Reiter and Shawn Greeley from the Library to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 8:22 p.m.

2012-0200 Adoption of an Ordinance Changing and Redefining the Voting Districts

Tabled

Town Manager Oefinger asked that this item be tabled.

2012-0201 Resolution Authorizing Use of a Description of the Ordinance Changing and Redefining the Voting Districts

Tabled

Town Manager Oefinger asked that this item be tabled.

2012-0222 Relinquishment of Drainage Easement Associated with Obrey Resubdivision, Route 184

Discussed

The Town Manager explained that the Town accepted a drainage easement for a proposed development that included a Town road. The property has been resubdivided and the Town road, and need for the drainage easement, eliminated. The easement was recorded in Land Records so it must be relinquished.

A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Antipas, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0226 Mystic Streetscape Project Phase II Construction Agreement

Discussed

Mike Murphy, Susan Cullen, and Rick Norris of OPDS were present to address the Council. The Town Manager explained that this project extends along Water Street from the entrance to the Mystic Arts Center parking lot to Noank Road. It is essentially a sidewalk and curbing project that adds some parking.

Mr. Murphy explained that this request involves a construction agreement for \$1.3 million in funding for the project. He described the location and nature of the work. New sidewalks will be constructed along Water Street except in the area of the Oyster House where they were recently constructed. Parking in the vicinity of the public rest rooms will remain. Near Margarita's, a depressed curb will provide access to the dumpsters and serve as a loading area. An infill sidewalk connection will be made at New London Road. Five new off street parking spaces will be constructed and excess pavement will be removed in the area of Randall's Wharf.

The Town's funding match is 20%, which will come from LoCIP funds. Mr. Murphy stated that staff has met with the affected property owners and notified residents in the area of the projects and all comments have been favorable. The project will be bid as early as fall with construction starting in early 2013 and taking a couple of months.

Councilor Schmidt asked about the loss of parking. Mr. Murphy noted there are illegal parking spaces being lost, but five are being added. The road will be repaved and granite curbing installed except in the area of the Oyster House where the concrete curbing will remain.

Mr. Murphy expects to start the project at the end of February and it will take three months. Councilor Flax asked about the possibility for "surprises." Mr. Norris noted that the project is much less onerous than Phase I and will not be done in phases. The work will not impact the existing retaining walls. Mr. Norris addressed timing issues with Phase I. Mayor Somers asked if the

project could be delayed to fall if an early spring start is not possible noting that the Council will not support work during the summer. Mr. Norris stated that he does not expect a delay in the state's review. The money must be obligated in this fiscal year.

Town Manager noted that the Council can identify a time period where no work will take place if it desires, subject to the time frame to spend the money. Restricting work times needs to be discussed with the contractors when they are chosen so that the Council can be made aware of any unintended consequences.

Mayor Somers asked if the hydrant in the vicinity of Randall's Wharf can be moved so that it does not eliminate two parking spaces and Mr. Murphy noted it can be looked at later. The new sidewalks will not be as wide as the sidewalks recently constructed so there will be no room for benches other than in front of the public rest rooms.

Councilor Streeter suggested no construction take place from the end of May through the end of September.

Mr. Norris stated that the work will not impact West Main Street activities. He added that there were no issues associated with the previous work done on Water Street. Mayor Somers asked if the contractor could meet with the Town Council to have a dialog about the project.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Flax, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

Councilor Antipas feels the time restrictions can be worked into the contract. He then asked why the Town should do the project. Mr. Murphy noted this is part of an overall cooperative project with Stonington. The sidewalks are in bad shape and the road bed needs to be repaved. This project will add sidewalks in some areas and ramps will be improved to standards. Mr. Murphy noted that this project has been identified for many years as worthwhile

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0196

Mystic Streetscape Project - Update

Discussed

Rick Norris from the Office of Planning and Development Services noted that DOT has scheduled a semi-final inspection of the project. He provided a comprehensive overview of remaining work including the installation of granite pavers; permanent street signage; completion of Bank Square park; mulching and/or planting of annuals in the planting areas pending late fall permanent plantings; completion of Bank Street and Gravel Street parks; and installation of remaining streetlights. With respect to utility work, AT&T and the cable companies need to complete underground connections and removal of wires. Removal of the overhead wires by CL&P is scheduled for July 31st or August 1st and then the poles can be removed. The goal is to complete the work by August 9th.

Councilor Antipas asked for confirmation that the contractor has no direct control over the utility companies. Mr. Norris explained that contracts are in place with the Town for some of the work, but the Town also has no control over the utility companies.

Mayor Somers stated that she has received compliments on how nice Mystic looks and the tourists have returned. Mr. Norris noted that there will be no further merchant meetings and any news or updates will be relayed through e-mail.

2012-0212

Mystic Arts Center Parking Lot Agreement - Update

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

Town Manager Oefinger reiterated the current parking agreement with the Mystic Arts Center (MAC) and Steamboat Wharf. Until July 28th, two hours of free parking is available. From July 29th to August 5th one hour of free parking will be available. The Town has expended all its funds

so going forward, the free parking is being provided by MAC and Steamboat Wharf.

2012-0221 Acceptance of Grant for Phase Two of the Lily Lane Trail

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Antipas, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

Doug Ackerman, interim Director of Parks and Recreation, noted that this grant was applied for in 2009. The Town was notified by DEEP that additional funds were available in FYE 2011 in the amount of \$68,000. The Town resubmitted the grant application and it was approved. The total cost of the project is \$85,000 with a 20% match from the Town

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0011 Groton Long Point Request for a Supplemental Appropriation

Discussed

Mayor Somers noted receipt of additional information from Groton Long Point on their supplementation appropriation request. Discussion was tabled to the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

2012-0230 Burnett's Corners Preservation Society Inc. Building - Update

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

Town Manager Oefinger noted that this property was turned over to the Burnett's Corners Preservation Society about 20 years ago with the intent of preserving the building. Members of the Town Council and RTM have raised a number of concerns about the condition of the building over the years. The Town recently received a court order to demolish the building and lien the property. The Town has obtained a wetlands permit. Public Works crews will take the building down on August 9th and finish grade the site on August 10th.

2012-0223 Application for State Financial Assistance for Purchase of Fusconi Property

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger noted that the Town Council and RTM have approved acquisition of the Fusconi property. A \$455,000 grant is available from the state and Town Manager Oefinger stated he is seeking authorization to submit the grant.

A motion was made by Mayor Somers, seconded by Councilor Flax, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0229 Central Corridor Rail Coalition Request for Support

Discussed

Discussion occurred on whether to provide a resolution of support for a proposal to reinstate passenger rail service from Brattleboro, Vermont to New London. Councilor Flax noted that Palmer, Massachusetts is the likely site for a casino. The Mayor stated she will contact the Central Corridor Rail Coalition for additional information.

2012-0228 Noank Fire District Response on Noank School Reuse

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Flax, to enter executive session at 9:22 p.m. to discuss 2012-0228 Noank Fire District Response on Noank School Reuse and to invite Town Manager Mark Oefinger to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 9:40 p.m.

2012-0225 Town Manager Annual Evaluation

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Watson, to enter executive session at 9:41 p.m. to discuss 2012-0225 Town Manager Annual Evaluation and to invite Town Manager Mark Oefinger to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 9:58 p.m.

7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List

Recommended for Deletion:

2011-0238 Road Reconstruction Bond Ordinance

Not Discussed

2012-0069 Police Station Renovations

Not Discussed

2012-0145 Permanent School Building Committee - Activity Update

Not Discussed

2012-0157 OpSail 2012 - Update

Not Discussed

2012-0178 Economic Development Commission - Potential Work Program Items

Not Discussed

8. OTHER BUSINESS

A special meeting of the Committee of the Whole was scheduled for August 7th at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the Town Manager's evaluation.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.